Minister's Award for

Environmental Excellence

Application Guide 2013

Introduction

Across Ontario, there are many examples of companies, organizations, communities and individuals that have gone above and beyond what's required by environmental legislation, often using innovative and unique approaches to reduce their impact on the environment.

The **Minister's Award for Environmental Excellence** recognizes outstanding environmental achievement in Ontario. The award honours individuals and organizations working to enhance and protect our environment.

Award recipients are given formal recognition for their outstanding efforts. They receive a plaque, and use of the award wordmark in their own promotional materials. The Ministry of the Environment also profiles recipients and their success stories on the ministry's website.

Objectives

The objectives of the Minister's Award for Environmental Excellence are to:

- recognize and encourage environmental excellence
- foster innovation in environmental protection
- raise awareness about the importance of protecting the environment.

Focus Areas

For 2013, the ministry is accepting applications to recognized work in the areas of Great Lakes protection and environmental innovation. However, initiatives outside of these focus areas will also be considered.

Protecting the Great Lakes

- Activities that protect, conserve or restore the Great Lakes waters and ecosystem or that seek to educate to protect, conserve or restore the Great Lakes waters and ecosystem.

- Examples could include, but are not limited to actions that:
  - improve water quality
  - protect beaches, wetlands, shorelines/coastal areas
  - connect people to the Great Lakes.

Environmental Innovation and Stewardship

- Activities that protect, restore the natural environment and ecosystem or that seek to educate and/or raise awareness about the need to protect or restore the natural environment or ecosystem.

- Examples could include, but are not limited to actions that:
  - improve water quality
  - improve air quality
  - connect people to the natural environment or ecosystem.

Eligible Activities

The program is intended to recognize the following types of action undertaken within Ontario in the last three years:

1) Activities that result in environmental or related human health benefits (e.g.

reductions in releases of pollutants, protection of drinking water); or
2) Activities that foster knowledge, values or behaviour change through innovation, promotion or outreach that leads to environmental benefits.

This program is not intended for basic research activities, however applied research is eligible.

Applications should clearly demonstrate how the activity has or will positively benefit the environment and how it meets the assessment criteria listed at the end of this document.

Examples of Eligible Activities

To assist applicants in determining whether initiatives may be eligible, examples of activities are listed below. These are not meant to be exhaustive or limiting.

- environmental achievement through community or stakeholder involvement or collaboration
- education and outreach approaches
- leadership, innovation or early adoption of new technology, practices or demonstrations
- leadership or innovation in achieving compliance.

Applicant Eligibility Criteria

Eligible Applicants

- Must be an Ontario business, non-governmental organization, individual, institution, conservation authority, aboriginal community or organization.
- Can be a municipality, only if the municipality applies as part of a group that includes non-municipal applicants.
- Can apply together with one or more other eligible applicants.
- Must reside in Ontario and must be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Canada if the applicant is an individual.
- Must demonstrate outstanding or innovative leadership that inspires or facilitates community actions or behaviour change in others, if the applicant is an individual.
- Must submit only one application each application period.

Ineligible Applicants

- Provincial or federal government and related agencies.
- Individuals employed in the Ontario Public Service or immediate family of individuals employed in the Ontario Public Service.
- Sole proprietorships, partnerships and corporations in which individuals employed in the Ontario Public Service are owners of or have a controlling financial interest.

Previous Applicants

Applicants selected for recognition in 2012 may re-submit in an attempt to win a 2013 award. However, award winning activities from 2012 may not be submitted again.

Applicant Categories

Successful applicants will be recognized in one of six categories:

1) Small business (less than or equal to

100 employees*)
2) Large business (more than 100 employees*)
3) Non-governmental organizations (not-for-profits)
4) Individuals and students
5) Institutions (including academic and research)
6) Communities**

* Refers to the number of employees in the company, including any parent companies worldwide.

** Applies to one or more organizations or individuals and includes conservation authorities, Aboriginal communities/ organizations, municipalities and groups of organizations. Municipalities may apply only as part of a group that includes non-municipal applicants.

Application Process

Eligible applicants may apply or be nominated by a third party (with permission from the nominated party). All applications must be submitted electronically, and may also be submitted by mail, in either case to be received on or before **5:00 p.m**. on **October 18, 2013.** The application form can be downloaded from: www.ontario.ca/environmentalexcellence.

Please ensure that your application includes complete answers to all questions.

Applicants are encouraged to include additional material such as photos, supporting letters, and other background material to support their application, in electronic format if available. Printed copies will be accepted**.**

Please limit application (including supporting materials) to less than 10 MB in total size for the electronic submission.

Please refer to the last page of the application form for details on how to submit your completed application.

Selection Process

The following process will be used to select eligible applicants:

- Applications will be received at the Ministry of the Environment.
- All applications will be acknowledged.
- All applications will first be reviewed for eligibility and completeness. Clearly ineligible or incomplete applications will not be further reviewed.
- The ministry will check an applicant's environmental compliance status. Applicants must have a good environmental compliance record to be eligible for the award. This is at the ministry's discretion. Applicants (other than individuals) are also required to declare whether they are currently in compliance with environmental, labour, and tax laws.
- Applicants are asked to declare whether any provincial government funding was received relating to the application, and the source and amount of the funding. This will be taken into consideration in the evaluation.

Assessment Criteria

The following criteria will be used to assess the applications:

- **Environmental impact or benefits**: Refers to tangible benefits to Ontario's environment or to the health of Ontarians resulting from the activity.
- **Fostering behaviour change**: The extent to which the activity leverages behaviour change in others through outreach, education, social marketing, etc.
- **Originality and innovation**: Refers to the use of unique or innovative techniques, including the early adoption or demonstration of new applied environmental technologies, practices or approaches.
- **Community or stakeholder involvement:** The extent to which the activity was developed and/or implemented in collaboration with key stakeholders or community groups.
- **Guiding principles:** The extent to which the activity incorporates stewardship, sustainability and the use of the pollution prevention principle (*see ‘Explanation of Terms’ box for explanation).
- **Transferability and scalability:** Demonstrated potential for the approach to be used on a wider scale by others.
- **Social or economic impact or benefit:** The benefit to the community and Ontario's economy.
- **Overall merit:** This criterion will also take into account differences in size, region, scope of activities, and government funding.

*Explanation of Terms

Pollution prevention is “the use of processes, practices, materials, products or energy that avoids or minimizes the creation of pollutants and wastes, at the source”. Pollution prevention does NOT include recycling, treatment, disposal or remediation (CCME, 1996).

Sustainability and stewardship are related principles that signify taking collective responsibility for the environmental impact of actions. According to Stewardship Canada, **stewardship** is a "shared responsibility between organizations, communities and individuals to manage and protect our environment and ecosystems. It is both an action and an ethic by which Canadians care for land, water and air today, and for generations to come."

Environment Canada has defined **sustainable development** as "the process of developing land, cities, businesses and communities so that our current needs are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It recognizes that social, economic and environmental issues are interconnected and that decisions must incorporate each of these aspects in order to be successful over the longer term."

Deadline:

October 18, 2013 at 5:00 p.m. is the due date for completed applications. Both electronic applications and any mailed hard copies must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on the deadline date to be accepted.

Please submit applications to:

Address:

Ministry of the Environment

Environmental Innovations Branch

ATTN: Minister's Award for Environmental Excellence

135 St. Clair Avenue West, 11th Floor
Toronto, ON M4V 1P5

Environmental.Excellence@ontario.ca

For more information contact:

Public Information Centre

In the Greater Toronto Area:

416-325-4000

Toll-free: 1-800-565-4923

TT Toll-free: 1-800-565-4923

Email: picemail.moe@ontario.ca

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